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ABSTRACT

This packet of questionnaires and guides is designed to garner information about public opinion concerning policy for guiding the National Institute of Education's (NIE) curriculum activities. The following questions are focused on: (1) How should NIE define "curriculum"? (2) Should NIE help develop new curricula? (3) Should NIE evaluate new curricula? (4) Should NIE help implement new curricula? (5) Who should plan curriculum activities with NIE? (6) How much curriculum leadership should NIE exert? (7) Who should perform curriculum activities for NIE? (8) Should NIE emphasize research, development, or implementation? (9) How should NIE divide its development efforts? and (10) What types of new curricula should NIE develop? A discussion guide is provided for each of these questions. (DS)

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NIE CURRICULUM DEVELOPMENT ISSUES

Guides for Public Discussion

ED170243

DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH, EDUCATION, AND WELFARE
NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION
WASHINGTON, D.C. 20208

OFFICE OF THE DIRECTOR

The enclosed discussion guides are a significant part of the work of the NIE Curriculum Development Task Force, which was established in November, 1975, at the request of NIE's policy making body, the National Council on Educational Research.

The National Council is now considering a number of policy choices for guiding NIE's curriculum activities. The Council has asked the Task Force to gather information that will help to guide those policy choices.

The Council is seeking the answers to these questions:

1. How should NIE define "curriculum"?
2. Should NIE develop new curricula?
3. Should NIE evaluate new curricula?
4. Should NIE help implement new curricula?
5. Who should plan curriculum activities with NIE?
6. How much curriculum leadership should NIE exert?
7. Who should perform curriculum activities for NIE?
8. Should NIE emphasize research, development, or implementation?
9. How should NIE divide its development efforts?
10. What types of new curricula should NIE develop?

One of the most crucial types of information for answering these questions is the views of all interested parties--parents, other citizens, students, school personnel, curriculum specialists, scholars, and so forth. For each question, the Task Force has developed a yellow discussion guide outlining some policy choices and it has developed a blue summary of all choices for all questions. The yellow guides and the blue summary accompanying this letter have been designed to help us collect your views, either in a discussion session or through your written reactions.

Thank you for your time and interest in responding to these questions. We look forward to hearing from you and promise to consider your statements carefully as we develop our policies.

Harold L. Hodgkinson

Harold L. Hodgkinson
Director

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U S DEPARTMENT OF HEALTH
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NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF
EDUCATION

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What The Task Force Has Done So Far

A year ago the Task Force began by identifying curriculum issues, problems, and concerns expressed by professionals and laypersons in over 60 organizations and in 50 key documents. The results were published in January, 1976 as Current Issues, Problems, and Concerns in Curriculum Development. The report was widely circulated. (Write for a copy if you are interested.)

Last spring the Task Force continued to seek opinions and then condensed the issues into the accompanying yellow discussion guides and blue summary.

Last summer the Task Force commissioned a national panel of scholars to to descirbe curriculum development in the U.S. during the past century--particulary the past 20 years--commissioned a national cross-section of curriculum developers to tell what they have learned through personal experience, and commissioned a national panel of policy analysts to write the merits of alternative curriculum policies for NIE. (Write for copies of the papers if you are interested.)

What The Task Force Is Doing Now

The Task Force is currently holding meetings to discuss the topics in the discussion guides. And it is working with professional associations and other organizations to mail the guides to interested members who want to send in their opinions.

What The Task Force Will Do Next

This winter the Task Force is sponsoring a national conference at which the scholars, the experienced curriculum developers, the policy analysts, local school personnel, state and Federal officials, and laypersons will discuss issues in curriculum development, what would be an appropriate Federal role, and what would be the best role for NIE. (Write for a copy of the proceedings if you are interested.)

How To Voice Your Opinion

By responding to the discussion guides, any individual can act as a policy advisor. Opinions expressed at meetings, by telephone, and in the mail will become a very important part of what the Task Force sends to the National Council.

Please discuss, telephone, write, or simply use the blue summary accompanying the yellow guides. (You are welcome to keep the guides.)

If you choose to use the blue summary, note that it contains a place to indicate your opinion on the alternatives presented in each yellow guide. After studying each guide and forming an opinion, select an alternative in the summary or write your own. Then send the summary to us soon so that your opinions can be considered.

Those Are Not NIE's PROs And CONs In The Guides

Those PROs and CONs in the yellow guides are <u>not</u> NIE's arguments, please remember. They are simply arguments the Task Force has heard and are repeated in the guides to stimulate discussion. They do not necessarily indicate NIE's views.

THE NATIONAL INSTITUTE OF EDUCATION

The National Institute of Education (NIE) was created by the Congress in 1972 to "help solve or alleviate" critical problems of American education through research and development.

The need was and is clear. The Nation invests nearly $120 billion per year in education--more than the total U.S. defense budget--yet less than a fraction of one percent of the total is spent on research and development to improve education. By comparison, agriculture spends about 3.2 percent on research and development; health about 3.6 percent.

The quality of education our children receive will help to determine their future. If we are to improve American education, we must make a firm National commitment to examine critical problems, develop new methods and practices, try out new ideas in schools, evaluate their effectiveness, and help States and local districts adopt proven ideas and practices. State education agencies and local school districts simply do not have the time, money, or personnel to carry on such research and development programs. Nor could the Nation afford the endless duplication that would result from such localized efforts. With this in mind, the Congress concluded in NIE's enabling legislation that "while the direction of the education system remains primarily the responsibility of State and local governments, the Federal government has a clear responsibility to provide leadership in the conduct and support of scientific inquiry into the educational process."

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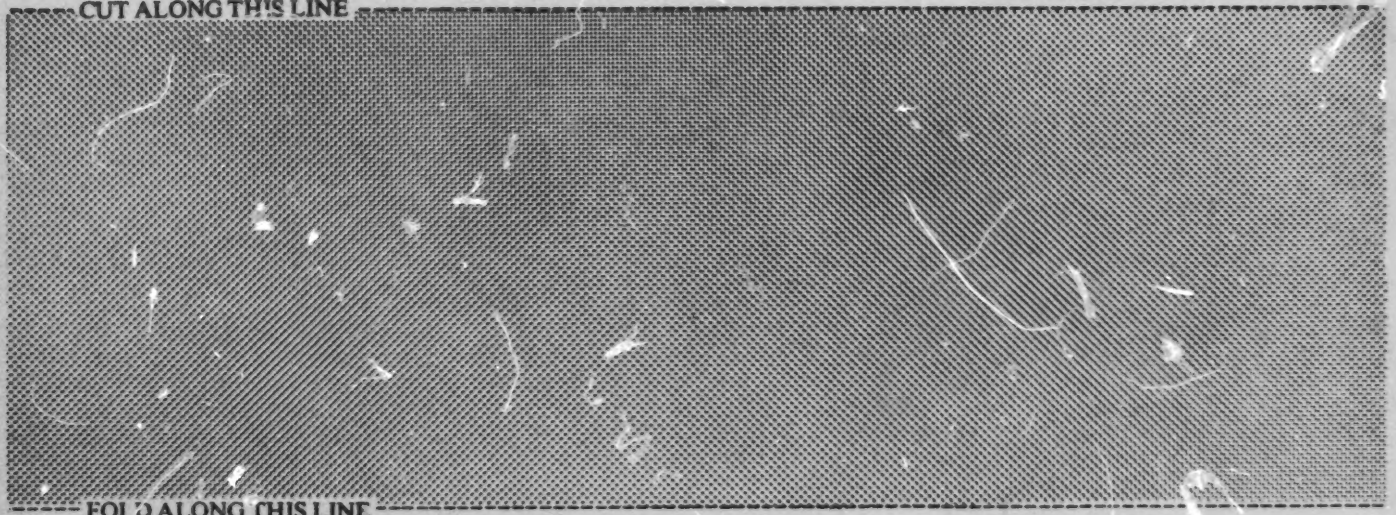

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IF YOU WISH MORE INFORMATION, CUT OFF, SEAL WITH TAPE AND MAIL TO NIE.

Please send me any materials circulated by the Curriculum Development Task Force.

Name _____ (Please print clearly)

Position _____

Institution _____

Mailing Address _____ (Number) _____ (Street)

_____ (City) _____ (State) _____ (Zip)

Now in its fourth year, NIE has developed a specific problem-oriented program that responds to the concerns and needs of educators, the Congress, and the American public. Institute policy is set by the National Council on Educational Research, a panel of distinguished citizens appointed by the President and confirmed by the Senate. To focus NIE activities on the most pressing academic and administrative problems in the schools, the Council has identified six program areas which form the basis for the Institute's organization. They are: Basic Skills; Educational Equity; Education and Work: Finance and Productivity; School Capacity for Problem Solving, and Dissemination and Resources.

The Institute's plans and activities within each program reflect more than two years of work, involving Chief State School Officers, the Congress, representatives of education associations and minority groups, State legislators, Federal officials, State and local school board members, and scores of teachers, researchers, and school administrators.

To prepare those plans, the Institute has held national conferences on such issues as reading comprehension problems; teaching competencies; "white flight" from urban to suburban communities; declining test scores; mathematical skills; racial, ethnic, or sexual test bias; the role of Federal and State governments in disseminating educational innovations and information; the educational needs of women and minorities; and the neural mechanisms that affect learning and memory.

The curriculum Development Task Force is continuing that kind of involvement.

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Jon Schaffarzick, Chairman
NIE Curriculum Development Task Force
National Institute of Education
Room 815
1200 19th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20208

NIE CURRICULUM POLICY SUMMARY

NIE wants to know what you think about the policy alternatives it is considering on each topic covered by the yellow discussion guides accompanying this summary. Each discussion guide contains background information and arguments for and against each policy alternative. After carefully studying each yellow guide and forming an opinion, write, telephone, or--if you prefer--simply indicate your views on this summary and mail it to us soon so that your opinions can be considered. If you have a better alternative than the ones shown in this summary, write your own in the margins.

(1) HOW SHOULD NIE DEFINE "CURRICULUM"?

See Discussion Guide 1

The term "curriculum" means different things to different people. Check or write what it **does mean** to you. Then check or write what it **should mean** to NIE. Your responses may not be the same.

MY OWN DEFINITION OF CURRICULUM (check one or more)	WHAT NIE'S DEFINITION OF CURRICULUM SHOULD BE	WHAT DOES "CURRICULUM" MEAN TO YOU? WHAT SHOULD IT MEAN TO NIE?
☐	☐	1. **What is taught**: *the information, the substantive content, the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values students are to learn.*
☐	☐	2. **How it is taught**: *the instructional methods teachers use--individualization, grouping, class discussions, lectures, laborabory work, homework, etc.*
☐	☐	3. **Teachers' materials**: *curriculum guides, syllabi, courses of study, bibliographies, lists of resource materials, lists of resource personnel, etc.*
☐	☐	4. **Students' materials**: *testbooks, workbooks, films, tapes, equipment, supplies, etc.*
☐	☐	5. **School experiences**: *all learning experiences, influenced but not determined solely by the content and methods teachers use.*
☐	☐	6. **All experiences**: *all learning experiences, not only in school but also outside of school--influenced but not determined solely by what the school itself does.*
☐	☐	7. **The combination** *of definitions checked above.*
☐	☐	8. **None of the above**. *"Curriculum" is* _____

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Prepared for NIE by Policy Studies in Education, New York, New York

② SHOULD NIE DEVELOP NEW CURRICULA?

See Discussion Guide 2

School curricula must change to keep up with new scholarly knowledge and with social and economic trends.

WHAT SHOULD NIE DO ABOUT DEVELOPING NEW CURRICULA?
(Check <u>one or two</u> alternatives.)

☐ 1. <u>Nothing</u>. NIE should leave their development entirely to others.

☐ 2. <u>Stimulate others</u>. NIE should stimulate others to develop new curricula by pointing to the need, giving evidence of its importance, projecting the number of users, and suggesting what types of curricula might be developed in what manner at what cost on what time schedule for what potential market.

☐ 3. <u>Create new approaches</u>. NIE should create better approaches to curriculum development (models, principles, guidelines, manuals, examples of good practice) to help others.

☐ 4. <u>Create new examples</u>. NIE should develop illustrative but unfinished curricula (concepts, designs, short curricular units, sample teacher guides, exemplary pupil materials) and allow others to expand them into full-fledged curricula.

☐ 5. <u>Offer training and technical assistance</u> to help others. NIE should offer training (in selecting and organizing substantive content, writing performance objectives, selecting teaching methods, designing teachers' guides, developing pupil materials) and technical assistance (consultation, critiques, lists of experts in substantive content and instructional methods, etc.) to help others.

☐ 6. <u>Develop new curricula</u>. NIE should perform all the steps necessary to develop new curricula, doing everything from formulating the designs through producing complete descriptions of instructional activities and complete publishable packages of all necessary teacher materials and student materials.

☐ 7. <u>None of the above</u>. NIE should: _____

_____

_____

③ SHOULD NIE EVALUATE NEW CURRICULA?

See Discussion Guide 3

WHAT SHOULD NIE DO ABOUT EVALUATING ANY NEW CURRICULA IT DEVELOPS? WHAT SHOULD NIE DO ABOUT EVALUATING ANY NEW CURRICULA OTHERS DEVELOP?
(Check one or two alternatives.)

☐ 1. Nothing. NIE should stay out of curriculum evaluation.

☐ 2. Stimulate others. NIE should stimulate others to evaluate new curricula by publishing lists of promising but unevaluated programs, explaining the need to evaluate them, and suggesting alternative approaches and instruments and analyses and interpretations that might be employed.

☐ 3. Construct new approaches. NIE should create better schemes of evaluation (models, principles, examples of excellent evaluations) to guide others in developing instruments and techniques.

☐ 4. Create new instruments and techniques. NIE should create instruments (tests, interview schedules, observation guides, etc.) and techniques (statistical methods, report formats, etc.) for others to use.

☐ 5. Offer training and technical assistance. NIE should offer training (in evaluation theory, evaluation design, instrument development, data analysis, data interpretation, report writing) and technical assistance (instruments, techniques, advice, critiques, names of consultants, summaries of previous evaluations) to help others.

☐ 6. Evaluate NIE curricula. NIE should perform actual evaluations of any new curricula created by NIE, beginning with the choice of methodology and ending with published reports of findings.

☐ 7. Evaluate other curricula. NIE should perform actual evaluations of new curricula created by others, beginning with the choice of methodology and ending with published reports of findings.

☐ 8. None of the above. NIE should: _____

_____

_____

④ SHOULD NIE HELP IMPLEMENT NEW CURRICULA?

See Discussion Guide 4

The best designed new curricula have no value whatever to students unless they are properly implemented.

IF NIE DEVELOPS NEW CURRICULA, WHAT SHOULD IT DO ABOUT MOVING THEM INTO USE BY THE SCHOOLS?

(Check one or two alternatives.)

☐ 1. Nothing. NIE should make no attempt to get its products used.

☐ 2. Supply information. NIE should offer information (descriptive brochures, illustrative lessons, sample test items) about its new curricula but should play an essentially passive role even at that and should go no further.

☐ 3. Encourage others. NIE should encourage others to help schools use its products. Encouragement can come in the form of announcing their availability, explaining the problems and opportunities they address, and suggesting what kinds of information, assistance, and training teachers might need to use them.

☐ 4. Arrange for publication. NIE should arrange for publication of its curricular materials, offering attractive copyrights and accepting modest royalties to promote their widespread distribution.

☐ 5. Offer training and technical assistance. NIE should provide training (either in how to use its specific products or in how to use new products of the same type) to help institutions and classroom teachers implement them.

☐ 6. Promote NIE curricula. NIE should offer the full range of implementation supports needed to promote the spread of its new curricula, taking every necessary step from announcing their availability through arranging the publication of their curricular materials to training teachers in how to use them.

☐ 7. Build selectivity rather than building demand. What NIE should create among consumers is not a desire for its products but instead the ability to choose products intelligently. It should publish guides to help consumers choose products, suggest techniques for small-scale pilot evaluations before massive implementation, discuss what kinds of products work best in what circumstances when used by what teachers with what students.

☐ 8. None of the above. NIE should: _____

_____

_____

⑤ WHO SHOULD PLAN CURRICULUM ACTIVITIES WITH NIE?

See Discussion Guide 5

NIE cannot solve all curricular problems. There are more potentially valuable curriculum activities than NIE can undertake. Therefore, NIE must plan its activities very carefully.

WHEN NIE PLANS ITS ACTIVITIES, WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED AND HOW SHOULD NIE SOLICIT THEIR VIEWS?

(Pick the one best method for each group, or suggest better methods, or suggest additional groups.)

METHOD

1. No need to involve this group
2. Commission papers
3. Poll by mail
4. Poll by telephone
5. Convene meetings
6. Attend meetings already scheduled
7. Other (please specify)

_____

_____

GROUP
(Enter method numbers in boxes)

- ☐ College and university scholars
- ☐ Classroom teachers
- ☐ Parents and citizens
- ☐ Leaders of professional associations and unions
- ☐ Leaders of parents and citizens groups, labor unions, and employers
- ☐ Curriculum specialists in state education agencies and local education agencies
- ☐ Curriculum development organizations
- ☐ Publishers
- ☐ Other (please specify)_____

_____

⑥ HOW MUCH CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP SHOULD NIE EXERT?

See Discussion Guide 6

NIE can act either as an active leader or as a passive follower in the curriculum field.

HOW MUCH INITIATIVE SHOULD NIE EXERT IN CURRICULUM IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITIES?
(Choose one of these two alternatives or write your own.)

☐ 1. None at all. Instead, NIE should respond to the initiatives of other agencies, organizations, and groups.

To which of the following should NIE be particularily responsive?

- ☐ Other government agencies
  - ☐ other Federal Agencies
  - ☐ state agencies
  - ☐ local agencies
- ☐ Major national organizations and associations
  - ☐ professional
  - ☐ parents, citizens' groups, labor unions, employers, etc.
- ☐ Neglected minority populations who have exhausted local and state sources of assistance.
  - ☐ blacks
  - ☐ women
  - ☐ poverty groups

☐ 2. NIE should initiate action under certain conditions.

- ☐ When the needed curriculum improvement is a matter of clear national importance.
- ☐ When NIE can enlist the active endorsement of major national organizations or leaders of minority populations.
- ☐ When other school districts such as state education departments and local education agencies have not done so.

☐ 3. None of the above. NIE should: _____

_____

(7) WHO SHOULD PERFORM CURRICULUM ACTIVITIES FOR NIE?

See Discussion Guide 7

NIE is a funding agency. Whatever NIE wants done, someone else must do. Perhaps the most significant decisions NIE makes are its choices of performers.

WHOM SHOULD NIE FUND TO DO WHAT?

(Choose one or two performer(s) for each curriculum activity and enter their number(s) beside that activity.)

POSSIBLE PERFORMERS	CURRICULUM ACTIVITY (Enter performer numbers in boxes)
1. Local school districts	
2. Intermediate school service agencies	
3. State education departments	
4. Federal education agencies	☐☐ Developing New Curricula
5. Nonpublic elementary or secondary schools	
6. Colleges and universities	
7. Regional educational laboratories	☐☐ Evaluating New Curricula
8. University-based research and development centers	
9. Professional associations and unions	
10. Independent non-profit organizations	☐☐ Supporting Implementation of New Curricula
11. Publishers	
12. Other (please specify)	☐☐ Other (please specify)
_____	_____
_____	_____

⑧ SHOULD NIE EMPHASIZE RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, OR IMPLEMENTATION?

See Discussion Guide 8

HOW SHOULD NIE DIVIDE ITS EFFORTS AMONG CONDUCTING RESEARCH, DEVELOPING NEW PRODUCTS, AND SUPPORTING IMPLEMENTATION?

(The table below shows what NIE is doing currently. How should this table be changed, if at all, for the next 3 years? Allocate 100 percentage points.)

Activity	The Present Balance	A Better Balance
Conducting Research	15%	☐
Developing New Products	70%	☐
Supporting Implementation	15%	☐
	100%	100%

Must Total 100%

⑨ HOW SHOULD NIE DIVIDE ITS DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS?

See Discussion Guide 9

Development can be thought of as inventing, creating, or producing new variations in substantive content, teaching methods, instructional materials, techniques of selecting and grouping students, school schedules, school facilities, teacher training, or other aspects of schooling. To which of these, or to what combination, should NIE devote its efforts?

HOW SHOULD NIE DIVIDE ITS DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS?

(Allocate 100 percentage points.)

Areas for Development	Recommended Division of Effort
New Substantive Content	☐
New Instructional Methods	☐
New Instructional Materials	☐
New Techniques of Selecting and Grouping Students	☐
New Ways of Scheduling Instruction and Grouping Students	☐
New Designs for School Facilities	☐
New Methods of Teacher Training	☐
Other: _____	☐
	100%

Must total 100%

1C WHAT TYPES OF NEW CURRICULA SHOULD NIE DEVELOP?

See Discussion Guide 10

NIE must make decisions about the types of curricula it will develop.

WHAT TYPES OF CURRICULA SHOULD NIE DEVELOP?
(For each topic below, choose one or two areas in which NIE should concentrate.)

● 1. Student Population
Check one or two
- ☐ Normal
- ☐ Gifted
- ☐ Handicapped
- ☐ Black
- ☐ Female
- ☐ Poverty
- ☐ Ethnic
- ☐ Other _____

● 2. Grade and Level of School
Check one or two categories and one or two choices in each
- ☐ Pre-School, Ages 3-5
  - ☐ Nursery School
  - ☐ Kindergarten
- ☐ Elementary Education, Ages 6-11
  - ☐ Primary Grades 1-3
  - ☐ Intermediate Grades 4-6
- ☐ Secondary Education, Ages 12-17
  - ☐ Junior High School
  - ☐ Senior High School
  - ☐ Vocational School
- ☐ Postsecondary Education, Ages 18-26
  - ☐ 2-year Institutions
  - ☐ 4-year Institutions
  - ☐ Technical Institutes
  - ☐ Professional Schools
  - ☐ Post-Graduate Studies
- ☐ Adult Education, Ages 27 and Up
  - ☐ 2-year Institutions
  - ☐ 4-year Institutions
  - ☐ Technical Institutes
  - ☐ Professional Schools
  - ☐ Post-Graduate Studies
- ☐ Other _____

● 3. Type of School
Check one or two
- ☐ Public
- ☐ Parochial
- ☐ Private
- ☐ Proprietary
- ☐ Other _____

● 4. Demographic Setting
Check one or two
- ☐ Urban
- ☐ Suburban
- ☐ Rural
- ☐ Other _____

● 5. Subject Field
Check one or two
- ☐ Art
- ☐ Business and Office Education
- ☐ Driver Education
- ☐ Foreign Languages
- ☐ Health Education
- ☐ Home Economics
- ☐ Industrial Arts
- ☐ Language Arts/Reading/English
- ☐ Mathematics
- ☐ Music
- ☐ Physical Education
- ☐ Science
- ☐ Social Studies
- ☐ Special Education
- ☐ Distributive Education
- ☐ Trades and Industry
- ☐ Vocational Agriculture
- ☐ Other _____

● 6. Type of Behavior
Check one or two
- ☐ Knowing (cognitive)
- ☐ Feeling (affective)
- ☐ Performing (psychomotor)
- ☐ Other _____

● 7. Organization of Substantive Content
Check one or two
- ☐ Subject-centered
- ☐ Problem-oriented
- ☐ Other _____

● 8. Diversity of Curricula
Check one or two
- ☐ Many different curricula
- ☐ Single best curriculum
- ☐ Other _____

● 9. Another topic for NIE to consider and my recommendations for focus:

_____

PLEASE COMPLETE

If you choose to indicate your views on this summary and mail it to us, we will understand your opinions better if you respond to these two items. No need to sign your name, however.

1. ARE YOU A (check one)

☐ 1. Professional educator
   1. If so, are you a
      ☐ 1. Teacher or professor
      ☐ 2. Specialist
      ☐ 3. Administrator
      ☐ 4. Other (please specify) _____
   2. Please identify your current
      1. Subject area(s) taught _____
      2. Grade level(s) taught _____
      3. National professional association membership(s) _____

☐ 2. Parent
☐ 3. Interested citizen
☐ 4. Other (please specify) _____

2. IS YOUR EMPLOYER A (check one)

☐ 1. Local school district
☐ 2. Intermediate school service agency
☐ 3. State education department
☐ 4. Federal education agency
☐ 5. Nonpublic elementary or secondary school
☐ 6. College or university
☐ 7. Regional educational laboratory
☐ 8. University-based research and development center
☐ 10. Independent non-profit organization
☐ 11. Publisher
☐ 12. Other (please specify) _____

IF YOU WISH TO MAIL YOUR VIEWS TO NIE, WRITE TO:

Jon Schaffarzick, Chairman
NIE Curriculum Development Task Force
National Institute of Education
Room 815, 1200 19th Street, N.W.
Washington, D.C. 20208

NIE CURRICULUM POLICY DISCUSSION GUIDE

ONE IN A SERIES

NIE wants to know what you think about the policy alternatives it is considering on this topic. Please discuss, telephone, write, or simply indicate your opinion on the blue summary accompanying these guides and send it to us. If you want further information, please send your name and address.

HOW SHOULD NIE DEFINE "CURRICULUM"?

The term "curriculum" means different things to different people. In fact, it can mean different things at different times to the same person.

A brief recounting of how the definition of the word has expanded during this century (more exactly, how the word has acquired new defintions without losing its old definitions) appears as background information in this discussion guide.

Refer to the last page of this guide for background information.

Like each of the ten yellow discussion guides in these series, this guide seeks the answers to just one or two key questions. The two questions asked by this guide are:

1. What <u>does</u> "curriculum" mean to you?

2. What <u>should</u> it mean to NIE?

Your answers to these two questions may not be the same. For example, you may believe that the word is best defined as "all learning experiences" yet you may believe that NIE should adopt a narrower definition to focus its curriculum development efforts on, say, "the instructional methods teachers use". Your reasons for recommending that NIE adopt such a definition might be that NIE has limited funds, or that you believe research findings are available for improving instructional methods, or you may have other reasons for distinguishing between what "curriculum" means to you and what it should mean to NIE.

In any case, knowing what you want the word to mean to NIE is essential in interpreting your answers to all the questions in the later guides which use the word.

NIE Curriculum Development Task Force
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Prepared for NIE by Policy Studies in Education, New York, New York

For example, suppose that when you get to yellow discussion guide 10, you recommend that NIE improve curricula for disadvantaged students. But suppose NIE assumes that by "curriculum" you mean classroom instructional materials for students when in fact you mean all learning experiences. If NIE then proceeds to develop better classroom materials for disadvantaged students, you will be disappointed that it has not simultaneously tried to improve the instructional power of the students' home environments.

Getting a good defintion is important because the way NIE defines curriculum may set boundaries around its curriculum activities. In the example, if NIE had defined curriculum as all learning experiences, it would have had to work to improve students' home life and community life as well as the mass media--in addition to school materials.

The following defintions range from a rather narrow conception of curriculum to a very broad conception of it. The first definition centers on the content students are expected to learn in school while the last expands to encompass all learning experiences students undergo, in school and out.

In considering which definitions NIE should use, remember that narrower definitions make NIE's task easier while broad ones make it harder. For example, it is easier to select better subject matter content than it is to improve every aspect of school life. But it is not as important in influencing learning. Generally, the broader the conception of curriculum, the more its influence on learning but the harder it is to improve. Conversely, the narrower the conception of curriculum, the less its influence on learning but the easier it is to improve. Thus NIE must choose between making big improvements and weak influences on learning and making small improvements and strong influences on learning.

Below are six alternative definitions of the word "curriculum". Each one is explained briefly.

Now turn to page one of the enclosed blue summary. As you read the alternative definitions in this yellow discussion guide, check the definitions you prefer on the blue summary or write your own. And if you have better reasons for using those definitions than the reasons given in this yellow discussion guide, write them in the margins of the blue summary.

WHAT DOES "CURRICULUM" MEAN TO YOU?
WHAT SHOULD IT MEAN TO NIE?

L. What is taught: *the information, the substantive content, the knowledge, skills, attitudes and values students are to learn.*

- This defintion strips the term "curriculum" to its core, the "stuff" of learning, the essential beginning point of every definition of curriculum.

2. How it is taught: *the instructional methods teachers use--individualization, grouping, class discussions, lectures, laboratory work, homework, etc.*

   - This defintion views the process of education as essential: it views learning how to learn as the permanent outcome of schooling: your education is what you remember after you have forgotten the content you were taught in school.

3. Teachers' materials: *curriculum guides, syllabi, courses of study, bibliographies, lists of resource materials, lists of resource personnel, etc.*

   - This definition refers to the actual documents which describe the curriculum content and teaching methods. These documents usually contain the most ambitious statements of what the official curriculum is intended to be.

4. Students' materials: *textbooks, workbooks, films, tapes, equipment, supplies, etc.*

   - This defintions underlines the importance of the materials used by students. It assumes that those materials contain the actual content and represent the actual methods students will experience--no matter what the "official" curriculum may be.

5. School experiences: *all learning experiences, influenced but not determined solely by the content and the methods teachers use.*

   - This definition view the curriculum as all the things that happen to students in school, in class and out of class, intended and unintended, influenced by other students as well as directed by teachers.

6. All experiences: *all learning experiences, not only in school but also outside of school--influenced but not determined solely by what the school itself does.*

   - This definition views the home, the community, and mass media as influencing learning perhaps as strongly as the school.

7. Certain combinations *of the definitions listed above.*

BACKGROUND

The meaning of the word "curriculum" has expanded to the point at which it is equivalent to "schooling" or, since life itself is educative, to "living".

Early in this century, the word tended to have a more restricted meaning, to be roughly equivalent to "subject matter", that is, the content to be learned. Since schools then, as now, were engaged primarily and directly in transmitting knowledge and only secondarily and indirectly in shaping attitudes and--at least for most students--not concentrating on developing physical skills, the content to be learned was essentially the knowledge to be learned. Thus, "curriculum" was commonly used to mean the knowledge taught.

During the first half of the century, psychological research and theory succeeded in establishing the idea that there are many influences on learning. It became increasingly clear that schools not only teach the content in the curriculum: they teach the whole child. That is, it became evident that students learn both less and more in school than the knowledge contained in official school curriculum guides.

Just as important, it became increasingly clear that students learn a great deal outside of school. Educators came to understand that the home, the community, the mass media, and even students' friends are powerful teachers, working day and night seven days a week around the year.

The heavy financing of compensatory education for disadvantaged students during the past 10 years and the aggressive attempts to design successful ways to teach them again made it vividly clear that it is not the school alone which influences learning. If it were, the intensive school-based programs for such students presumably would have had more dramatic and more lasting effects.

As these understandings grew, the meaning of the term "curriculum" grew along with them. Originally used to designate the formal processes and the intended outcomes of schooling, the term gradually came to mean the entire process of education--in school and out of school--and all the learning generated by that process.

There is a problem with the concentric definitions of the term, with "knowledge" at the center and the successive rings of meaning extending outward until the outermost encompasses "all learning". The difficulty is that the term seems to carry all its meanings within the confines of a single conversation--indeed, within the speech of a single individual. The term "curriculum" is often given first one meaning then another, with scarcely any signal being given as the speakers skate easily back and forth across the concentric rings, their use of the word "curriculum" meaning now one thing, now another.

In order to get a firm grasp on what participants mean when they offer NIE advice about "curriculum", it seems essential to ask for their definitions of the term. That is the purpose of this discussion guide.

NIE CURRICULUM POLICY DISCUSSION GUIDE

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(2)

SHOULD NIE DEVELOP NEW CURRICULA?

School curricula must change to keep up with new scholarly knowledge and with the changing needs of students and society.

NIE might do nothing at all about creating new curricula or it might do a great deal. That is, NIE might leave curriculum development entirely to others. Or it might stimulate others to develop curricula by pointing out needs and opportunities. Or it might go even further by creating models or guidelines for others to follow in developing curricula. Or it could go even further by creating semi-finished curriculum packages, allowing others to expand them into full-fledged curricula. Or it might offer technical assistance or training. Or it might go all the way and develop complete publishable packages.

Refer to the last page of this guide for background information.

Turn to page 2 of the enclosed blue summary. As you read the following discussion, check alternatives on the summary or write your own. And write better arguments in the margins of the summary.

WHAT SHOULD NIE DO ABOUT DEVELOPING NEW CURRICULA?

1. Nothing. NIE should leave their development entirely to others.

   PRO ● Any Federal participation whatsoever in curriculum development can lead to Federal control or strong influence over curriculum. Local education agencies, state education agencies, universities, and publishers will develop whatever is necessary--and without risking a uniform national curriculum.

   CON ● Improving curricula is the best way to improve schooling. NIE is the only national agency dedicated to improving all of elementary and secondary education through research and development. Unless NIE supports curriculum research and development, much curriculum development will be grounded on folk wisdom rather than on science.

2. Stimulate others. NIE should stimulate others to develop new curricula by pointing to needs, giving evidence of their importance, and suggesting what types of curricula might be developed in what manner at what cost on what time schedule for what potential market. And NIE should reward success by recognizing those who develop outstanding new curricula.

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PRO ● There is already enough talent and interest among school districts and state education departments and individuals and companies to create new curricula once they know what is needed and wanted. NIE can act as a giant radar to read the environment and signal others when the time is right to develop and distribute something new.

CON ● Stimulation is not enough. NIE cannot expect others to find the money, assemble the talent, and do all the work without help. In fact, others already know what is lacking: what they need is help in developing it. And sometimes they need subsidies to help pay for the spread of "thin market" materials which cannot be sold profitably.

3. Create new approaches. NIE should create better approaches to curriculum development (models, principles, guidelines, manuals, examples of good development procedures) to help others do it themselves.

PRO ● NIE can avoid any semblance of Federal control or influence over curriculum and still be enormously helpful by designing and testing better curriculum development methods, especially methods a single school can use. NIE could also serve as a clearinghouse to help cross-fertilize the work of curriculum development groups around the country.

CON ● People could easily mistake the curriculum development approaches described by NIE as being Federally-approved methods, leading directly to a uniform national approach, which would be almost as bad as a uniform national curriculum. Moreover, cross-fertilization already occurs naturally through professional interchange among curriculum developers.

4. Create new examples. NIE should develop illustrative but unfinished curricula (concepts, designs, short curricular units, sample teacher guides, exemplary pupil materials) and allow others to expand them into full-fledged curricula, shaping them as they see fit.

PRO ● The real benefit of the National Science Foundation science courses was not that they were adopted by schools intact but rather that they served as genuinely new examples of what could be done. In fact, some felt that those courses were too complete, too perfect, leaving no room for teacher creativity. NIE should not produce straitjackets but semi-finished goods which teachers can tailor to a comfortable fit. And by creating good examples at low cost rather than complete courses at high cost, NIE will not feel it needs to promote the spread of its products simply because it spent millions developing them.

CON ● Genuine creativity for some teachers comes in generating a design for instruction, not in executing someone else's design. On the other hand, examples are not enough for most teachers. Examples stimulate desire without satisfying it. Take publishing as an analogy. Publishers could not market their products if they consisted of examples; most teachers want materials sufficient for a whole year.

5. Offer training and technical assistance. NIE should offer training (preservice and inservice, both during the academic year and the summers) and technical assistance (consultation, critiques, lists of experts in substantive content and instructional methods, etc.) to give others the knowledge and skills they need to develop new curricula.

PRO • This is what curriculum developers need most. It is more valuable than guidelines or new approaches or new examples. Training and technical assistance build a permanent capacity to develop curricula, not only once but over and over again as conditions change through the years. And it makes schools less rather than more dependent on Federal curriculum activity.

CON • Enough talented people and organizations already exist to develop any needed curricula. Moreover, training and technical assistance are extremely time-consuming and expensive. This is the work of universities dealing with individuals who choose to specialize in curriculum and can pay for their own training. Furthermore, it would take years for the benefits of NIE-sponsored training to show up in the form of better curricula.

6. Develop new curricula. NIE should support all the steps necessary to develop new curricula, doing everything from formulating the designs through producing complete descriptions of instructional activities and complete publishable packages of all necessary teacher materials and student materials.

PRO • High quality curriculum development is time-consuming and expensive. Only Federal agencies like NIE have the time and money required to support such work. The National Science Foundation has demonstrated that the best curriculum talent in the nation can be attracted to work on national projects. Even when schools do not adopt the resulting programs outright, they make excellent resource materials for local adaptations.

CON • This is the straight road to a uniform national curriculum, indoctrinating students in Federally-approved ideas, and Federal domination of the schools. The values in most Federal curricula are those of the intellectual elite who designed them and do not represent the values of the population at large. What the schools need is not Federally-approved values but instead a wide variety of value perspectives from which to choose.

BACKGROUND

Historically, state legislators and state education departments have set boundaries around elementary and high school curricula. Sometimes the boundaries have been broad, sometimes narrow. Examples: the abuses of alcohol and tobacco must be taught but the choice of materials is left to the schools; state history must be taught and the state supplies a recommended syllabus; certain textbooks are approved for use and others are not; or certain textbooks are actually purchased by the state and supplied free to the students. In general, the boundaries have been broad but have been narrowing somewhat in recent decades.

Historically, local school districts have created curricula more or less within the boundaries set by their states, using various combinations of local curriculum committees, university consultants, published materials, practices borrowed from other schools, and--more than anything else--the inventiveness and creativity of local classroom teachers.

Historically, schools as institutions and teachers as professionals have depended very heavily on textbooks and other instructional materials supplied by commercial publishers. The publishers have used college professors and classroom teachers--sometimes working as co-authors --along with their own editorial and artistic staffs to create the books and materials. Generally, the publishers have been sensitive to the school market, designing materials to fit--or stay just a bit ahead of--current state and local curricula so that their books and materials would sell as widely as possible.

Beginning in the mid-1950s, the National Science Foundation used a distinctive new approach to curriculum development. It employed teams of university scholars to write new science courses embodying the latest and best scientific knowledge. These courses were typically tried out by classroom teachers, revised, and marketed through commercial publishers. The Foundation spent unprecedented amounts to create high-quality courses and materials--costs ranged from about $1 million to about $8 million for a single one-year course in a single subject such as chemistry--not counting the costs of publishing, disseminating, and training teachers to use the course.

Some say the earlier approach had its advantages: teachers understood and were committed to and could use what they had helped develop; publishers understood their market and could meet it. But others say the approach had its disadvantages: curricula grew stale in fast-changing fields like science because scholars at the frontiers of knowledge did not help update them; publishers supplied what the market demanded but did not upgrade the demand.

Some feel the centralized approach used by the National Science Foundation also had its advantages: it produced distinctive, high-quality courses that set a whole new standard for what curricula could be like. Others feel that the approach had its disadvantages: the courses were not suitable for all students in all schools and they required great teaching skill which could be developed only through expensive re-training of teachers.

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3

SHOULD NIE EVALUATE NEW CURRICULA?

NIE may develop new curricula. Others may develop new curricula.

Assume that those new curricula have been evaluated during their development and revised accordingly. They now appear to work in the experimental situations. But they have never been tried in a variety of schools under a variety of conditions. Should NIE do anything about evaluating them further?

The possibilities for NIE range from staying out of evaluation entirely to performing complete evaluations not only of curricula developed with NIE support but also of curricula others have developed. Between those two extremes, there are other possibilities.

Refer to the last page of this guide for background information.

Turn to page 3 of the enclosed blue summary. As you read the following discussion, check alternatives on the summary or write your own. And write better arguments in the margins of the summary.

WHAT SHOULD NIE DO ABOUT EVALUATING ANY NEW CURRICULA IT DEVELOPS?
WHAT SHOULD NIE DO ABOUT EVALUATING ANY NEW CURRICULA OTHERS DEVELOP?

1. Nothing. NIE should stay out of curriculum evaluation.

   PRO • Federal evaluation will result in a Federal approved list for programs which come out well and a Federal blacklist for programs which come out poorly. The eventual result would be a Federalized nationwide curriculum consisting of approved programs which had passed Federal inspection.

   CON • Any constructive Federal participation in the curriculum field depends on having sound evaluation both of what already exists and of newly-developed curricula. NIE cannot expect others to conduct evaluations designed to guide Federal action. Moreover, NIE's research and development activities make it a unique national resource in evaluation methodology.

2. Stimulate others. NIE should stimulate others to evaluate new curricula by publishing lists of promising but unevaluated programs, explaining the need to evaluate them, and suggesting alternative approaches and instruments and analyses and interpretations that might be employed. Furthermore, NIE should publish lists of sound evaluations which others can take as models and should support national organizations of evaluators which would adopt their own procedures and set their own standards.

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PRO • Sufficient evaluation capability already exists among universities, research and development centers, regional educational laboratories, non-profit organizations, consulting companies, state education agencies, and local education agencies to perform evaluations. Stimulation, guidance, and a chance for recognition are all that are missing.

CON • There is neither sufficient talent nor adequate evaluation methodology available today. Consequently, stimulation might produce much activity but few competent evaluations. Stimulate the field as it might, NIE would still not get solid evidence to guide its own curriculum decisions. And neither would the state and local school officials who also need hard evidence.

3. Construct new approaches. NIE should create better schemes of evaluation (theories, models, principles, prototypes of excellent evaluations) to guide others in developing instruments and techniques.

PRO • This is the ideal Federal stance because it would use the full capabilities of a national research and development agency to improve evaluation without directing the outcomes and without rendering value judgments about new curricula. NIE could use its full scientific expertise without exerting influence over the content and character of the curriculum.

CON • There are no value-free or bias-free approaches to evaluation. Every choice of theory and method is guided by values. Thus any NIE leadership in generating new approaches will inevitably be accompanied by influence over the outcomes, however unintended. Thus NIE cannot assist in evaluation without influencing the outcomes of evaluation and eventual decisions about curricular choices.

4. Create new instruments and techniques. NIE should create instruments (tests, interview schedules, observation guides, etc.) and techniques (statistical methods, report formats, etc.) for others to use.

PRO • Current instruments are not sufficiently sensitive, reliable, and valid for trustworthy measurement. Current techniques are not suitable for conducting evaluations under natural program conditions in the field. The result is that evaluators misjudge the effects of new curricula. No other agency --Federal, state, or local--has the mission or the money to improve them.

CON • Commercial testing companies, non-profit test developers, university researchers, and evaluation specialists in research and development centers, regional educational laboratories, and state and local education agencies have both a repertoire of instruments and techniques and a capacity to develop whatever else is needed. Moreover, the diversity of those organizations and individuals assures a highly desirable variety of instruments and techniques.

5. Offer training and technical assistance. NIE should offer training (in evaluation theory, evaluation design, instrument development, data analysis, data interpretation, report writing) and technical assistance (instruments, techniques, advice, critiques, names of consultants, summaries of previous evaluations) to help others.

PRO • Qualified curriculum evaluators are in short supply. Specialists are needed to evaluate curricula while they are being developed so as to guide their revision; specialists are needed to evaluate curricula under natural conditions of field use after they have been completed. Moreover, by training and assisting evaluators, NIE can improve evaluation without exerting undesirable Federal influence on evaluation findings.

CON • Training and technical assistance are a slow, expensive, and uncertain way to get evidence on whether new curricula are any good. NIE can get more value for its dollar either by improving evaluation methodology and tools or by sponsoring actual full-scale evaluations of new curricula. The results would be faster and more useful to decision makers.

6. Evaluate NIE curricula. NIE should perform actual evaluations of any new curricula sponsored by NIE, beginning with the choice of methodology and ending with published reports of findings.

PRO • NIE is clearly obligated to evaluate any curricula it sponsors before offering them for use and certainly before promoting their use.

CON • NIE would experience a clear conflict of interest in evaluating its own curricula. Even if the evaluations were objecti , they would lack credibility to outsiders.

7. Evaluate other curricula. NIE should perform actual evaluations of new curricula created by others, beginning with the choice of methodology and ending with published reports of findings.

PRO • NIE cannot produce all the curricula, may not produce the best curricula, and perhaps should not produce curricula at all. But it could objectively evaluate curricula produced by others, something no one else is likely to do. NIE could thereby help schools choose sound curricula.

CON • The Federal seal of approval that would inevitably accompany NIE evaluations would be objectionable both to curriculum producers and to curriculum users. The producers and users themselves can evaluate new curricula using diverse approaches and standards yielding multiple judgments of value.

BACKGROUND

Evaluating new curricula has always been an extremely complex process. It involves judging (if not measuring) objectives, procedures, materials, and outcomes. It involves determining not only the effectiveness of the curriculum but its acceptability to students and teachers and parents; its fit with existing curricula; and so on. It involves determining not only the effectiveness of the short-term outcomes but also the long-term outcomes. It involves not only determining effects on students who experience the curriculum but effects on the professionals and institutions which offer the curriculum: their willingness to change again, etc. It involves multiple judgments made by many interested parties who may or may not agree either on the effects or on the value of the effects: students, teachers, administrators, parents, and other citizens. It involves using many kinds of instruments: student tests, questionnaires, interview schedules, observation guides, and so on. It involves gathering many kinds of data: evidence of learning, of opinions, of morale, and of costs. It involves many kinds of data analyses and interpretation, statistical and non-statistical. It involves many kinds of reporting, technical and journalistic, to many different audiences.

Historically, evaluation has been largely a matter of judgment by those in a position to gauge the immediate value and effects of new curricula: students, teachers, administrators, and parents. Evidence supporting those judgments has traditionally been informal and impressionistic but not necessarily wrong.

The instruments most often used to measure the effects of a curriculum have been teacher-made examinations supplemented by tests included with the instructional materials and rounded out by nationally standardized tests of ability and achievement published by commercial companies and nonprofit testing organizations.

The past 20 years have seen the emergence of high-cost, high-quality national curriculum projects. These projects have been accompanied by the creation of high-cost, high-quality evaluation procedures, especially those designed to help form and revise new curricula as they are being created. The same years have also seen the emergence of organizations specializing in the evaluation of new curricula. Evaluation methodology has improved as a result.

The past 10 years have seen the emergence of innovative new curricula for hard-to-reach populations such as the disadvantaged and bilingual minorities. Because these programs have been expensive and because their effectiveness has been open to question, attention and money have been directed to evaluating them. The same years have seen the creation of the NIE/USOE Joint Dissemination Review Panel with standards for judging new curricula produced under NIE or USOE sponsorship. Again, there have been advances in evaluation techniques as a consequence.

As of the mid-1970's, formal, structured evaluations designed to gather hard evidence of student learning are of special interest to external organizations which finance and produce new programs. Conversely, informal, unstructured evaluations consisting of impressions based on "soft" evidence of program acceptability and general effects continue to be of special interest to school districts which must operate programs.

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4

SHOULD NIE HELP IMPLEMENT NEW CURRICULA?

The best designed new curricula have no value whatever to students unless they are properly implemented--properly put into practice in the classroom.

If NIE develops new curricula, what should it do about moving them into use by the schools?

One answer is: nothing at all. A reasonable answer. But there are other equally reasonable answers. One is that if NIE has a good reason to develop new curricula, it has an equally good reason to get them used.

But there are answers between those two. NIE might simply offer to cooperate with others who wish to distribute what it has developed. Or it might take its products as far as commercial publication, leaving their fate to the energies of the publishers and the judgments of the schools as to whether they will be purchased. Or it might instead improve the abilities of local education agencies to choose good products and to use them wisely.

Refer to the last page of this guide for background information.

Turn to page 4 of the enclosed blue summary. As you read the following discussion, check alternatives on the summary or write your own. And write better arguments in the margins of the summary.

IF NIE DEVELOPS NEW CURRICULA, WHAT SHOULD IT DO ABOUT MOVING THEM INTO USE BY THE SCHOOLS?

1. Nothing. NIE should make no attempt to get its products used.

   PRO • Federal products ought to be selected by the schools on their own merits. They ought to compete with alternative curricula under normal market conditions. If they are poor, they do not deserve Federal promotion. If they are strong, they do not need Federal promotion.

   CON • Anything worth developing is worth using. Anything distinctly better is likely to be distinctly different. Anything distinctly different will need some kind of special promotion, at least at the beginning.

2. Supply information. NIE should offer information (descriptive brochures, illustrative lessons, sample test items) about its new curricula but should play an essentially passive role even at that and should go no further.

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PRO • NIE owes it to local education agencies, state education agencies, and publishers to announce what it has produced. This is service, not a promotion.

CON • A passive offer of information is not enough to bring new curricula to the attention of the schools, given the flood of competing promotional information they get from other sources. NIE must go further simply to get its products a fair hearing.

3. Stimulate others. NIE should encourage others to help schools use its products. Publishers, nonprofit organizations, universities, state education agencies, service centers in intermediate school districts, individual school districts and cooperatives such as study councils are positioned to to this. Encouragement can come in the form of announcing the new products, explaining the problems and opportunities they address, and suggesting what kinds of training and assistance teachers might need to use them.

PRO • NIE must bring its products at least this far--showing them to prospective distributors and encouraging their interest--if schools are to learn that they exist. This stops short of promotion. Moreover, it interposes a decision-making layer between NIE and the schools to double-check NIE's views about its own products.

CON • No. Federal "encouragement" today will become Federal subsidies tomorrow. The fact that new curricula were Federally-supported--along with their apparent quality--will be sufficient encouragement to distributors. Any product with those advantages which fails to look attractive does not merit distribution.

4. Arrange for publication. NIE should arrange for publication of its curricular materials, offering attractive copyrights and accepting modest royalties to promote their widespread distribution.

PRO • This is the minimum NIE must do to insure that schools get a chance to purchase its products. But purchase is not obligatory and a commercial product must clear many hurdles to be selected by the schools. Thus Federal domination of the curriculum is not a risk.

CON • The repeated experience of the National Science Foundation in marketing its science courses through commercial publishers demonstrated that Federal curriculum products have an immediate and unfair competitive edge in the marketplace, even if they do not merit it. If an NIE product merits publication, publishers will seek it out. NIE need not initiate the publication of worthy products.

5. Offer training and technical assistance. NIE should provide training (either in how to use its specific products or in how to use new products of the same type) to help institutions and classroom teachers implement them.

PRO • Good development means nothing without good implementation. The key to good implementation is good training.

CON • Money for research and development in general education is extremely scarce. NIE's budget is the largest single pool of such money. NIE should not spend those scarce dollars on training and marketing.

6. Promote NIE curricula. NIE should offer the full range of implementation supports needed to promote the spread of its new curricula, taking every necessary step from announcing their availability through arranging the publication of their curricular materials to training teachers in how to use them.

PRO • Judgments about the need for new curricula should be made before they are developed. Once they are developed and tested, anything less than active promotion effectively reverses the original decision and wastes the money spent to create them.

CON • This is without question the surest way to Federalization of the curriculum. It would soon eliminate the diversity and variety that have enriched our culture and sustained our democracy for 200 years.

7. Build selectivity rather than building demand. What NIE should create in the schools is not a desire for its products but instead the ability to choose products intelligently. It should publish guides to help the schools choose products, suggest techniques for small-scale pilot evaluations before massive implementation, discuss what kinds of products work best in what circumstances when used by what teachers with what students

PRO • NIE should seek nothing more than intelligent consumers. It should let its products stand or fall on their merits.

CON • The best way for NIE to create intelligent consumers is to promote the spread of better products. An educated consumer cannot improve his situation if there is nothing better to consume.

BACKGROUND

The Importance of Curricular Materials. Teachers in elementary and secondary schools depend heavily on instructional materials to carry the substantive content and to support the instructional methods of their teaching. The most useful materials and thus the most influential are those designed for use by students rather than those designed for use by teachers.

It follows that new curricula which cannot be expressed in the form of student materials have difficulty reaching the classrooms and may not stay permanently once they arrive. For example, programs which enter the classrooms in the hands of trained teachers but without supporting pupil materials may leave the classrooms when those teachers leave. In contrast, programs which arrive in the form of student materials--as in the case of textbooks adopted, purchased, and retained in five-year cycles--may survive a shifting cadre of teachers.

Student materials, usually in the form of textbooks designed to provide a year's worth of information and classroom activities, are produced and marketed to schools by commercial publishers. The publishers maintain national distribution networks through advertising and sales representatives which give them access to virtually all the school markets they wish to reach.

This means that new curricula developed by NIE will probably have to travel--possibly in the form of textbooks--through commercial publication channels if they are to reach an appreciable number of schools and to continue in use. Thus the question of how much initiative NIE should use in placing its products into those channels and helping move them through is critical.

The Importance of Teacher Training. Historically, preservice teacher training dealt in specific teaching techniques and occasionally in specific instructional products. But in recent decades--especially since the 1930s--teacher training has become much less specific. New teachers are fairly well grounded in the substantive content they must teach, know something about student psychological development, have a general understanding of classroom organization and teaching methods, but have limited field experience in actual classroom teaching. (The current movement toward competency-based teacher preparation has reversed this trend in some institutions but is not typical nationwide.)

Inservice teacher education is largely a matter of on-the-job learning under sparse supervision. This has been particularly true since the 1930s.

Both beginning teachers and experienced teachers can cope reasonably well with traditional school curricula. But distinctive new curricula which require distinctive new teaching behaviors are difficult for many teachers to implement unless they get special training in those new behaviors.

This means that if NIE produces new curricula which require very different kinds of teaching, some kind of training must be provided. Thus the issue of how NIE should arrange for that training is critical.

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5

WHO SHOULD PLAN CURRICULUM ACTIVITIES WITH NIE?

NIE cannot solve all curricular problems. There are more potentially valuable curriculum activities than NIE can undertake. Therefore, NIE must plan its activities very carefully.

When NIE plans its activities, what other interested parties should help shape its deliberations? It might get the opinions of university scholars or elementary and secondary teachers or parents or curriculum specialists or publishers or others in some combination.

How should NIE reach each participant? It might poll their opinions, invite them to write papers, attend their meetings, or invite them to NIE-sponsored meetings or use some combination of methods.

Refer to the last page of this guide for background information.

Turn to page 5 of the enclosed blue summary. As you read the following discussion, check alternatives on the summary or write your own. And write better arguments in the margins of the summary.

WHEN NIE PLANS ITS ACTIVITIES, WHO SHOULD BE INVOLVED AND HOW SHOULD NIE SOLICIT THEIR VIEWS?

1. NIE should plan by itself.

   PRO • There is no realistic possibility that NIE can arrange genuine involvement of other parties. Any such attempt would be a mere ceremony. NIE should use its own Presidentially-appointed, broadly representative National Council for Educational Research consisting of professionals and laypersons, as well as its own very diverse professional staff, to guide its decisions.

   CON • The educational enterprise is far too complex to be represented even by the Council and the NIE staff. There is no substitute for direct, sustained contact with other organizations interested in curriculum activities. NIE can confer with organizations, convene advisory panels, conduct telephone surveys, sponsor polls of public opinion--all at reasonable cost in relation to their great value.

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2. College and university scholars. NIE should request policy papers from college and university scholars who give thoughtful attention to curriculum questions or solicit their counsel in some other way.

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PRO • Those who have made a life study of curriculum or who have had substantial experience with curriculum matters and who have the time to reflect on curriculum issues can give excellent advice.

CON • College and university scholars do not live in the real world of elementary and secondary education. Some say their lack of realism was demonstrated in the National Science Foundation high school science courses which were designed to educate embryonic scientists rather than the majority of students.

3. Classroom teachers. NIE should deal directly with classroom teachers to get curriculum advice.

PRO • Classroom teachers know the daily reality of school life best; they know the problems they face and the solutions they need; no one else--not even their elected representatives--can speak for them.

CON • There are 2 million classroom teachers spread across all subject fields and all grade levels and all kinds of school districts. While they know their own classrooms intimately, they are not in a position to offer broad policy advice on national curriculum issues.

4. Parents and citizens. NIE should deal directly with parents and teachers to get curriculum advice.

PRO • The clients and taxpayers know as well or better than any other group what the schools should accomplish. Their views cannot be fully expressed even by their elected representatives; thus they should speak for themselves.

CON • There are 100 million parents and even more taxpayers who have extremely diverse opinions about education and a mixed bag of impressions and evidence to support them. Converging their views into coherent policy advice is impossible.

5. Leaders of professional associations and unions. NIE should convene or otherwise communicate with the elected leaders and the professional staffs of these groups to get consolidated professional opinion about its curriculum activities.

PRO • The elected leaders and permanent staffs of these groups are in constant contact with their membership. NIE can reach the entire profession by speaking with a small number of these leaders.

CON • No one can adequately represent the teachers, professors, specialists, and administrators who work in the schools every day. Even their elected representatives inevitably lose touch once they leave the schools.

6. Leaders of parents and citizens groups, labor unions, and employers. NIE should convene or otherwise involve the elected leaders and the permanent staffs of these groups to get consolidated public opinion about its curriculum activities.

PRO • The most effective way to reach the millions of parents and citizens and other interested groups is through their leaders, who maintain their leadership by keeping in touch with their members and voicing their views.

CON • The official public views of any organization as articulated by its leaders must be distinguished from the far more diverse private views of its individual members. NIE needs advice from individuals, advice not available from the leaders.

7. Curriculum specialists in SEAs and LEAs. NIE should solicit the opinions of those who practice curriculum development, curriculum evaluation, and curriculum implementation day by day in state education agencies and in local education agencies.

PRO • These are the people who traffic in the realities of curriculum. Located halfway between substantive content scholars and instructional methodologists on the one hand and classroom teachers on the other, they are the interface between the two and understand both.

CON • Curriculum specialists are admittedly the arrangers and interpreters of curriculum, but they neither create it nor implement it and cannot speak as knowingly either as scholars or classroom teachers.

8. Curriculum development organizations. NIE should seek advice from administrators and specialists in organizations such as regional educational laboratories, university-based research and development centers, and independent nonprofit organizations specializing in curriculum development.

PRO • As primary producers of new curriculum products and as people who stay in constant contact with classroom teachers and curriculum specialists in the schools, these people are best located to advise NIE.

CON • The vested interest of curriculum producers in continuing what they are already doing, combined with their detachment from the daily realities of life in the schools, make them a poor choice as advisors.

9. Publishers. NIE should seek the opinions of commercial publishing companies which produce and distribute the materials which contain the bulk of the substantive content and which support teaching methods.

PRO • Because they know what flows and does not flow through their distribution network and because their very survival depends upon a clear understanding of what schools want and need, publishers are ideally situated to advise NIE.

CON • The vested interest of publishers in continuing to handle the kind of products they are currently distributing, as well as their distance from daily life in the schools, makes them a poor choice as advisors.

BACKGROUND

Curriculum development, curriculum evaluation, and help with curriculum implementation are planned by so many agencies, organizations, and individuals that, in one sense, they are not planned at all. That is, there is no master plan, no coordinated national grand design for curriculum activities.

Instead, a loose configuration of government agencies, non-government organizations, and enterprising individuals establish purposes, detect problems, locate opportunities, obtain funds, and compete with or cooperate with or ignore each other as they develop and/or evaluate and/or help implement new curricula.

This is not to say that they do not influence each other's activities. On the contrary, much of what they do is in response to actions taken by others. Indeed, there are far more reactions to what others have done than there are acts of leadership that depart sharply from convention.

The net effect of this uncoordinated high-response, low leadership behavior is perhaps surprising. The effect--despite the lack of centralized planning--is a rather cohesive, harmonious, and predictable configuration of curriculum activities. That cohesiveness helps bring about a high degree of stability and similarity in the educational system, making it possible for 20% of the American families to move to new homes every year yet find that the schools their children enter differ little from the schools their children left. That is, the major characteristics of the schools--who teaches what to which students with what methods and materials on what time schedules and in what school facilities--are so similar that mobile familes worry more about their children making new friends that about whether they will be prepared for the curriculum of their new schools.

It all works as though an enormous cluster of indivdual cells have chosen to communicate with each other, engage in mutually supportive activities, and form a single complex organism which acts as though it had a central nervous system and a single brain--even though it does not. That is, there are many planners and there is no one plan--yet there is what looks very much like a nationally-planned set of activities.

Evidently, the thousands of individuals, agencies, and organizations are held together by the capacity and the desire to communicate, the tendency to respond to each other, the widely-held belief that the schools should fit themselves to the students rather than the reverse, and the rewards for cooperating along with the penalties for not cooperating. All of it works to make a system out of self-directing components.

In order to play a constructive role in such an environment, NIE cannot plan what to do unless it has a thorough understanding of what other units in the system are likely to do. Thus, NIE must decide which of them to involve in its planning, whether to deal with individuals or organizations, and whether to let the people speak for themselves or speak through their representatives.

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HOW MUCH CURRICULUM LEADERSHIP SHOULD NIE EXERT?

NIE can act either as an active leader or as a passive follower in the curriculum field.

NIE might exercise no initiative, but instead respond to the initiative of other Federal, state, and local government agencies; national professional and citizens' groups; and minority populations.

Or NIE might initiate action--but only on matters of national importance, or when it can get the endorsement of national organizations, or when state and local agencies have clearly failed to act.

Refer to the last page of this guide for background information.

Turn to page 6 of the enclosed blue summary. As you read the following discussion, check alternatives on the summary or write your own. And write better arguments in the margins of the summary.

HOW MUCH INITIATIVE SHOULD NIE EXERT IN CURRICULUM IMPROVEMENT ACTIVITIES?

1. None at all. Instead, NIE should respond to the initiatives of other agencies, organizations, and groups.

PRO • NIE should be certain that it is doing what the nation needs, both to use its limited resources for worthy purposes and to justify its actions when they are questioned by Congress or others. The best way for NIE to know and to prove that it has made the right choices is to act only when it has been invited to act by significant outsiders.

CON • No other agency, organization, or group—Federal, state, or local; professional or citizen--is better situated than NIE to identify curriculum needs and to initiate curriculum action. Others always have the option of refusing to follow NIE's leadership. Their refusal would signal NIE to reconsider its course of action and would be sufficient insurance against NIE's doing something unnecessary or harmful.

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Prepared for NIE by Policy Studies in Education, New York, New York

To which of the following should NIE be particularly responsive?

* a. Other Federal, state, and local government agencies. As a government agency, NIE should be especially sensitive to the initiatives of other government agencies, partly because they are responsible for public education and partly because they are positioned to determine whether NIE's curriculum activities will ever influence actual classroom teaching.

    1) Other Federal agencies. As a Federal agency, NIE should be especially alert to problems identified by other Federal agencies such as the U. S. Office of Education, the National Science Foundation, and the U. S. Department of Labor. First, they are well situated to identify national problems. Second, their invitation would fully justify NIE's entry into a curriculum field.

    2) State agencies. Education is a state function and thus is the legal responsibility of state education agencies. NIE should act as a Federal service agency, responding to the state education agencies' curriculum initiatives.

    3) Local agencies. Local education agencies actually operate school programs day by day and understand best what they need. Thus NIE should follow their lead.

* b. Major national organizations and associations. These are the groups which best represent the views of millions of professionals and laypersons. As such, they merit NIE's special attention.

    1) Professional. NIE should think of itself as the servant of the education profession and should respond to the organized profession's sense of what is needed.

    2) Parents, citizen's groups, labor unions, employers, etc. The clients and supporters of the schools deserve NIE's ear more than any other organization or group because they are positioned to sense problems. And to veto NIE's solutions if they object to them.

* c. Neglected minority populations who have exhausted local and state sources of assistance. These groups continue to merit special Federal concern, especially from research and development organizations like NIE, which are responsible for improving the school system.

1) Blacks. Of all minority populations, blacks continue to be in greatest need and thus most deserve NIE's responsiveness.

2) Women. Sex bias in school curricula has had much to do with the status of women. Thus they have a special claim on NIE's attention.

3) Poverty groups. Irrespective of race, sex, or nationality, those who are poor merit NIE's special concern because standard school programs do not serve them well.

NIE should initiate action under certain conditions. NIE should exert positive leadership not only when there is a clear national interest or to improve social justice when others have failed to act.

PRO • NIE is the only organization charged by Congress with the "clear responsibility to provide leadership in the conduct and support of scientific inquiry into the education process." On national matters, NIE's duty is doubly clear. As a court of last resort for the nation's oppressed and neglected it is triply clear.

CON • Any problem on which NIE feels impelled to act in the absence of initiative by outsiders may not be a problem. There are enough genuine problems and enough articulate advocates that NIE need not and should not initiate action on other problems.

* a. When the needed curriculum improvement is a matter of clear national importance. The reasons for a Federal agency acting on national problems are self evident. (See Background for examples.) Congress and NIE's National Council can judge what is of national importance.

* b. When NIE can enlist the active endorsement of major national organizations or the leaders of minority populations. NIE should initiate curriculum activities but only when it can locate significant outside leaders who concur--and will testify publicly--that NIE should act.

* c. When other education agencies such as state education departments and local school districts have not done so. While NIE must not preempt or compete with state and local agencies, it is obligated to exert positive leadership when they have demonstrably failed to do so.

BACKGROUND

Over the past one hundred years, the Federal government has tended to initiate curriculum activities only on matters of clear national importance as distinct from matters of local, state, or regional importance. Both the Morrill Act in 1862 and the Smith Hughes Act in 1917 can be interpreted as Federal actions to introduce vocational education first into the colleges and then into the high schools in an effort to build and strengthen the national economy. The Federal government has also acted, albeit less dramatically, by subsidizing programs and sponsoring the creation of materials to help induct immigrant populations into the mainstream of life in the U.S.

World War I and World War II both stimulated Federal activity at the secondary and postsecondary levels to strengthen the wartime labor and military forces and, in the case of the G.I. Bill, to educate returning military personnel for a smooth transition into civilian life in the postwar years.

The Depression years of the 1930's stimulated Federal concern for the millions of students who remained in high school because they could not find jobs, giving the high schools for the first time a population unsuited for traditional college prep courses.

Russia's technological advances, symbolized by the launching of Sputnik I in the mid-1950's, aroused strong Federal interest in upgrading sciences and foreign language instruction in the high schools and colleges to meet the advancing international challenge.

In the 1960's, for a complex of reasons, disadvantaged and minority populations turned successfully to the Federal government to redress grievances arising from their long neglect by local and state educational authorities. The education of these hard-to-reach populations has been a clear Federal priority for the past ten years, partly to do simple social justice and partly to make them self-supporting members of the national economic system.

NIE's charter from Congress is very broadly drawn, committing it to the improvement of every aspect of education. This poses an issue for NIE: should it offer leadership across the board or should it offer leadership only on matters of clear national concern, playing a responsive but essentially passive role on other matters?

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7

WHO SHOULD PERFORM CURRICULUM ACTIVITIES FOR NIE?

NIE is a funding agency. Whatever NIE wants done, someone else must do. Perhaps the most significant decisions NIE makes are choosing who will perform its curriculum activities. (The term "performers" is used in this guide to describe all those individuals and organizations who might carry out any part of the work.) Each of the possible performers listed in this guide is qualified to conduct one or more kinds of curriculum activity, as noted below.

Refer to the last page of this guide for background information.

Turn to page 7 of the enclosed blue summary. As you read the following discussion, check alternatives on the summary or write your own.

WHOM SHOULD NIE FUND TO DO WHAT?

1. Local school districts, which will ultimately decide the fate of all new curricula, are particularly well qualified to:
   - Develop new curricula with a precise fit to the unique circumstances created by the local combination of students, teachers, community expectations, and local finances.
   - Evaluate new curricula by supplying sites in which the curricula can be tested under normal field conditions and judged by prospective users.
   - Help implement new curricula in other school districts by having experienced local teachers, specialists, and administrators train their counterparts in other districts.

2. Intermediate school service agencies (such as the California county offices, the Texas regional service centers, and the New York BOCES) are singularly well situated to:
   - Develop new curricula tailored to regional needs using such personnel combinations as university scholars, school district curriculum specialists, and local teachers.
   - Evaluate new curricula by arranging field testing in a cross-section of local schools, with the testing designed by university personnel, administered by school district specialists, and conducted by local teachers.
   - Help implement new curricula by circulating special materials from central libraries, conducting workshops, and listing exemplary program sites in the region.

3. State education departments, as the legally constituted authorities responsible for education, are uniquely able to:

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- Develop new curricula attuned to state statutes and regulations and existing state-endorsed curricula.
- Evaluate new curricula through the use of statewide testing programs and other uniform data-gathering devices, judging the results against statewide norms.
- Help implement new curricula through the state departments' combination of leadership, mandates, publications, curriculum and subject matter specialists, and statewide networks of intermediate school service centers.

4. Federal education agencies such as the National Science Foundation and the U.S. Office of Education's Bureau of Education for the Handicapped--because of their specialized knowledge, experience, and ready access to highly qualified specialists nationwide--are well-situated to cooperate with NIE in order to help it:
   - Develop new curricula in subject specialities such as science or new curricula for special populations such as the handicapped by arranging and subsidizing the participation of expert specialists.
   - Evaluate new curricula both by using their networks of field contacts to arrange classroom testing and by convening panels of experts to judge the curricula.
   - Help implement new curricula by advertising their availability, pointing out their potential, sponsoring and financing teacher training, and subsidizing local adoption.

5. Nonpublic elementary and secondary schools, because of their independence from the public school system plus their need to be distinctive, are especially equipped to:
   - Develop new curricula for such special populations as the gifted and talented and students with distinct ethnic or language backgrounds.
   - Evaluate new curricula for such populations by testing them in the special circumstances characteristic of nonpublic schools (very small classes in some cases and very large classes in others, talented if uncertifiable teachers, unusual physical facilities, the controlled environments of boarding schools, and so on).
   - Help implement new curricula by having their experienced teachers, specialists, and administrators train their counterparts in other public or nonpublic schools.

6. Colleges and universities are uniquely qualified to:
   - Develop new curricula requiring distinctly new substantive content, which is produced chiefly by college and university scholars.
   - Evaluate new curricula by calling on panels of scholars to judge the substantive content and on teams of educational researchers to design field tests and interpret the results.
   - Help implement new curricula by providing both preservice and inservice training for local teachers, specialists, and adminstrators.

7. Regional educational laboratories were constituted specifically to conduct curricular research and development and to get the results used in school classrooms. Thus, they are uniquely equipped to:
   - Develop new curricula by combining their own full-time staffs of curriculum specialists with outside consultants and local classroom teachers.
   - Evaluate new curricula by having their own full-time staffs of evaluation specialists use the laboratories' networks of affiliated school districts to test the new curricula under varied and realistic field conditions.

- Help implement new curricula by using their own full-time staffs of trainers to train other trainers to reach teachers in dozens or hundreds of school districts.

8. University-based research and development centers--because they are located on campuses where new knowledge is being produced and are themselves producing new knowledge and because they are charged with using that knowledge to improve curricula—have unusual capacity to:
   - Develop new curricula which incorporate the best substantive content generated by campus scholars and the best classroom practices generated by educational researchers.
   - Evaluate new curricula by giving balanced consideration to both the selection of content and the choice of teaching methods and materials.
   - Help implement new curricula by arranging for university personnel to train other trainers in both the new content and the new methods required by those curricula.

9. Professional associations and unions--because they represent the organized profession, view things with the eyes of individual professionals rather than schools as institutions, and are growing more powerful--are particularly able to:
   - Develop new curricula which will reflect professional values and win professional acceptance.
   - Evaluate new curricula in terms of their match to professional values and acceptability to the individual teachers, specialists, and administrators who must ultimately use those curricula if they are to succeed.
   - Help implement new curricula by offering the endorsement of professional leaders; arranging for and perhaps conducting inservice training; and modifying professional norms to accommodate the new curricula when necessary.

10. Independent nonprofit organizations, because they are highly responsive to outside demands and because their full-time staffs can concentrate their attention on curriculum activities, are uniquely situated to:
   - Develop new curricula which require concentrated effort by an assortment of talented experts as creators.
   - Evaluate new curricula by arranging both for them to be judged by experts and tested by classroom teachers.
   - Help implement new curricula by providing any required combination of materials, technical assistance, and training needed by local school districts.

11. Publishers--because of their combination of editorial, design, and production capabilities and because they produce most of the materials needed by students and teachers to use new curricula--are uniquely situated to:
   - Develop new curricula which will be sound, practical, acceptable, and affordable to local school districts.
   - Evaluate new curricula by arranging for market tests--the one kind of tests which all curricula must pass if they are to succeed.
   - Help implement new curricula by designing and supplying the materials and equipment necessary for them to reach classrooms and to survive.

BACKGROUND

The talent, creativity, energy, and experience of the teachers, professors, specialists, and administrators in the United States is unsurpassed anywhere in the world. The millions of laypersons who are associated with the schools in one way or another represent a further resource, and there are many ways that students themselves can be involved in improving curriculum.

Altogether, over 30 percent of the population is engaged in education and might conceivably help NIE plan curriculum activities, develop or evaluate new curricula, help get them implemented or, as a minimum, help decide who the performers should be.

The institutional arrangements for providing education are extremely diverse, yielding an impressive array of organizational settings in which curriculum activities can be performed. There are almost 17,000 local school districts; hundreds of intermediate school service agencies; departments of education in 50 states and 5 territories; a dozen Federal agencies engaged in education; thousands of private, parochial, and proprietary schools; over 2,700 colleges and universities; almost 20 Federally-created regional educational laboratories and university-based research and development centers; thousands of local, state, and national professional associations; hundreds of independent nonprofit organizations; and over 100 commercial publishers.

Each organization has the ability to perform various curriculum activities at assorted levels of quality and cost. Each has certain unique shortcomings which argue for it as a performer of development, evaluation, or implementation support activities. Yet each has unique short comings as well which argue against it as a performer. For example, universities are well situated to supply substantive content for new curricula but not as well situated to work with individual schools in implementing new curricula. And intermediate school service agencies have the opposite qualifications.

Certain combinations of organizations have overlapping qualifications which may make them compete with each other, as in the case of regional educational laboratories and independent nonprofit organizations, while other combinations have complementary qualifications which enable them to cooperate with each other, as in the case of publishers and local school districts.

Each organization has its preferences as to what it would like to do--and as to what it would like others to do.

NIE must be guided in its selection of performers by knowing who can do what, who wants to do what, what each wants the others to do, and what combinations of organizations have complementary rather than overlapping qualifications. The purpose of this discussion guide is to solicit information on those topics.

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8

SHOULD NIE EMPHASIZE RESEARCH, DEVELOPMENT, OR IMPLEMENTATION?

The ultimate purpose of research and development activities in education is to improve practice. About that, there is no doubt.

But there is doubt about the best balance to be struck between conducting research, developing new products based on that research, and supporting implementation of research findings and research-based products in the schools. And there are of course choices within each of those three.

NIE currently funds all three. But has it struck the best balance among them? Below are some arguments in favor or expanding each one: but remember: none can be expanded except by shrinking the others.

Refer to the last page of this guide for background information.

Turn to page 8 of the enclosed blue summary. As you read the following discussion, check alternatives on the summary or write your own. And write better arguments in the margins of the summary.

HOW SHOULD NIE DIVIDE ITS EFFORTS AMONG CONDUCTING RESEARCH, DEVELOPING NEW PRODUCTS, AND SUPPORTING IMPLEMENTATION?

1. NIE should conduct more basic research.

PRO • Because we lack a deep understanding of teaching and learning, the dollar spent for basic research buys more of value today than the dollar spent for developing products or for supporting implementation. Research-based theories, models, principles, and generalizations lay a foundation of solid evidence for everything that comes later.

The most valuable work NIE can do for the educaion profession is to give it adequate theories, clear principles of action, reliable generalizations. Nothing else would be nearly as useful.

If the research results are good enough, other agencies and organizations and groups will surely seek them out. Armed with the results, they could create excellent instructional materials and invent exemplary instructional practices.

NIE could rely on universities, publishers, and various school service agencies and the schools themselves to take care of distributing those materials and practices and supporting teachers in using them.

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And there is another argument as well. Unlike developing new products and supporting their implementation, NIE's supporting basic research does not raise the possibility of Federal domination of the schools, homogenization of the curriculum, and indoctrination of students in Federally-approved values.

Other organizations can take NIE's research findings, add their own values and beliefs and preferences, and go on to develop a highly desirable diversity of products and practices, multiplying options for the schools and assuring continued pluralism in our culture.

CON • Basic understanding of such complex behaviors as teaching and learning will elude scientists for decades to come. Limited continuing support of basic research is desirable but expanded support is not. The present 15% of NIE's budget for basic research is probably too large. NIE could be of more immediate help to the schools by developing useful products and supporting their implementation.

2. NIE should develop more new products.

PRO • Research findings are worthless unless they are translated into forms of professional practice which teachers can actually use. Research results must be converted into classroom specifics; improved course outlines, new methods of grouping teachers and students, new styles of verbal interaction between teachers and students, better student instructional materials, better instructional equipment, descriptions of supportive parental behaviors, etc.

Research results have been piling up for years. We already understand learning much better than we perform teaching. Those findings need to be applied.

Moreover, NIE is currently producing more knowledge than it is converting into useful programs and products. It needs to follow a deliberate policy of getting the value out of this knowledge by creating better programs and products.

And there is another argument as well. The best way for NIE to win support for its research program is to develop useful activities and products. The most persuasive testimony for increasing NIE's appropriation would be statements from state education agencies and local education agencies that what NIE has developed is helping them improve teaching and learning.

CON • Developing new products without a basic understanding of teaching and learning can lead NIE to support hunches at best, fads at worst. The 70% NIE spends for developing products at present is ample if not accessive and probably should be reduced. NIE can serve the schools best in the long run by conducting more research and in the short run by helping them implement existing research-based products.

3. NIE should provide more support for implementation.

PRO • The number of high-quality, research-based products already available is sufficient to make a dramatic improvement in teaching and learning--if only those products were implemented.

Recent studies have made it clear that innovations go wrong during

implementation at least as often as during development. That is, their problems lie as much as in the way they are used as in the way they are designed. What is missing is sufficient technical assistance and training to help teachers, specialists, and administrators use the innovations well enough to get their full benefits.

Moreover, studies indicate that even carefully developed products cannot and probably should not be used exactly as designed. Schools differ, teachers differ, students differ. Products must be adapted to each circumstance--not used just as they come out of the box. Perhaps the most important part of supporting implementation is helping schools and teachers make intelligent adaptations which bring about a wedding between the qualities of the product and the qualities of the local setting.

If the ultimate purpose of research and development activities is to improve practice, that improvement must occur through competent implementation and sensible adaptation.

Moreover, the ultimate evidence and testimony about the value of research and development will come from schools as they implement new programs and find them worthy. That is, local and state agencies will pass the final judgment on NIE and thus will decide how much support NIE deserves from Congress.

CON • NIE's job is research and development--not promotion. Ultimately, the products NIE sponsors must make their way on their own, without Federal subsidies, certainly without NIE subsidies. If the U.S. Office of Education, state education departments and local school districts want to rely on NIE to generate new knowledge and new products, NIE must rely on them to handle implementation. The 15% now spends to support implementation is more than enough.

STRIKING THE RIGHT BALANCE

Each set of arguments is convincing. The problem is that most of the arguments favor expansion. But one kind of activity must be reduced to increase another kind of activity. More basic research means less development and less support for implementation. More support for implementation means less basic research and less development.

How should NIE divide its efforts among the three activities, knowing that none can be increased except by reducing another?

The table below shows approximately how NIE divides its funds at present. How should this table be changed--say for the next three years--if at all?

Activity	The Present Balance	
Conducting Research	15%	
Developing Products	70%	
Supporting Implementation	15%	

BACKGROUND

The term "research" can be defined simply as creating new knowledge. The term "development" can be defined simply as creating new forms of professional practice. The term "supporting implementation" can be defined simply as helping people use those new forms of practice.

There has been vigorous debate as to how research and development and supporting implementation are connected to each other. Some think of the connections as "linear", with research findings being used to develop new practices and then schools being helped to implement those new practices. Others think of the connections as "circular", taking place in no fixed order, with an attempt to implement new practice often leading to the development of better practice and with the development of better practice often leading to further research and so on.

Regardless of the connections, most people agree 1) that the three processes are different, 2) that none will substitute for the others, and that 3) all three are necessary to improve professional practice.

Many people believe that not enough money goes into these three ways of improving educational practice. People disagree about how much is enough, but many people feel that the present figure--a tiny fraction of 1% of everything spent for education--is too low.

The nation spent $120 billion ($120,000,000,000) in 1975-76 for all public and nonpublic elementary, secondary, and higher education. NIE's 1975-76 budget of about $70 million ($70,000,000) amounted to just over one twentieth of 1% of that total. That is, for every $20 the schools and colleges spent to conduct education, NIE spent 1¢ to improve education.

Combining all research and development funds spent for education--by NIE, by the U.S. Office of Education, by the National Science Foundation, by the Office of Child Development, by the National Institute of Mental Health, by the Department of Labor, by the Department of Defense, by all state education agencies, and by all local education agencies--might produce a figure in the neighborhood of, say, $320 million. That would be a convenient figure for measuring with another yardstick: what business and industry spent for research and development. $320 million is what Bell Labs (a division of Western Electric) spent on research and development in 1975-76 to improve our telephones.

Most scientific research and development in education is financed by the Federal government. State education agencies and local education agencies spend only limited amounts on scientific research and development although they spend substantial amounts to improve education through such means as re-training teachers. Within the Federal government, NIE is the only agency responsible specifically and exclusively for research and development in education. Thus, decisions as to how NIE's funds should be divided among research, development, and supporting the implementation of research findings and developed products are crucial.

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HOW SHOULD NIE DIVIDE ITS DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS?

Development can be thought of as indenting, creating, or producing new variations in the six major elements of a school: teachers, students, substantive content, instructional methods and materials, time, and place.

Apart from what NIE does in supporting research and in supporting the dissemination of research findings and research-based products, NIE will presumably fund a certain number of development activities. How should NIE divide its development efforts? Which aspects of schooling should it try to improve?

Should it try to select and sequence new substantive content? Should it instead use research findings to invent better teaching methods? Should it give special attention to designing and producing better instructional materials? Should it try to come up with better methods of selecting and grouping students? Should it seek better ways of scheduling instruction? Should it work out new ways to construct school buildings and to design equipment as well as new ways to select entirely new learning locations outside of school buildings? Should it develop better methods of teacher training?

Refer to the last page of this guide for background information.

Turn to page 8 of the enclosed blue summary. As you read the following arguments in favor of each activity, check alternatives on the summary or write your own. And write better arguments in the margins of the summary. But remember, NIE cannot do everything.

HOW SHOULD NIE DIVIDE ITS DEVELOPMENT EFFORTS?

1. NIE should develop better substantive content.

What teachers, specialists, and administrators in local education agencies are least able to do is to keep subject matter content up to date, particularly in fast-changing areas such as mathematics and science. The same is true for personnel in state education departments. That is, since neither local or state personnel are scholars working at the frontiers of knowledge, they must depend on agencies like NIE to insure that the most up-to-date knowledge is embodied in the school curriculum.

Accordingly, NIE should give primary attention to selecting and organizing content for the curriculum.

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2. NIE should develop better instructional methods.

Content never reaches students unless good teaching methods are used. The great diversity of students in today's schools requires that each teacher have a rich repertoire of techniques to reach them. Furthermore, because most research is addressed to the learning process, NIE has a better research base for improving instructional methods than for improving any other aspect of schooling. Accordingly, NIE should give special attention to creating more effective instructional methods.

3. NIE should develop better instructional materials.

Teachers depend on instructional materials--especially instructional materials used by students--to carry the substantive content and to support the instructional methods they use. Accordingly, the instructional materials--especially those for students--are the most useful tools for teachers in implementing new curricula. Moreover, materials are the tangible curriculum which in fact flows through commercial publishing channels. What is not said in the form of materials may never be heard by classroom teachers. Thus, materials should be NIE's top priority.

4. NIE should develop better methods of selecting and grouping students.

Perhaps the influence on learning that is best recognized but least used in a deliberate, planned way is the influence of students on each other. The Federal court recognized it dramatically in *Brown v. Topeka* in 1954 when it struck down segregation and has recognized it forcefully since then in ordering school buring to improve racial balance. Less dramatic but perhaps no less significant is the influence of the gifted and the normal on each other, the handicapped and the normal on each other, the advantaged and the disadvantaged on each other, the older and the younger on each other, and so on. NIE should draw on research to develop scientific methods of grouping to take maximum advantage of powerful peer influences.

5. NIE should develop better ways of scheduling instruction.

Elementary and secondary schools continue to operate 185 days a year, 5 days a week, 5 hours a day, with 30-minute lessons in elementary classes and 45-minute lessons in high school classes. There are variations, but they have not erased this basic scheduling pattern.

There is little scientific evidence to validate this scheme but there have been promising experiments to challenge it. Time may be the single most important variable in determining how much students learn. NIE should draw on research to develop better time arrangements, perhaps varied according to subject fields, students, and circumstances.

6. NIE should develop better designs for school facilities.

The place of instruction--inside school buildings or outside school buildings--can significantly influence learning. Teachers have long known, for example, that the full realities of outside life are impossible to simulate in the classroom and have insisted on getting their students outside. Current experience with career education is providing more proof that guided learning can take place outside. NIE should draw on research findings to design the best combination of school and nonschool facilities, perhaps varied according to subject fields, students, and circumstances.

7. NIE should develop better methods of teacher training.

What does not pass through the hands of the teacher does not reach the mind of the student. The content of a well-designed textbook may not even be presented to the class, much less taught skillfully and reinforced appropriately, unless the teacher knows the content and how to teach it. And good teachers will of course supplement that textbook content with their own knowledge.

Motivating students to learn is perhaps the most important aspect of teaching, especially for elementary and secondary school students. When it comes to motivating students, there is no substitute for a skillful teacher.

In short, much of the students' desire to learn and a substantial part of what they do learn comes directly from their teachers rather than from their books.

Moreover, declining enrollments in most schools means stable faculties. It follows that if NIE is serious about improving schooling, it must concentrate on improving teachers through long-term institutes, short-term workshops, special courses, demonstration teaching, teachers' centers, and other means.

BACKGROUND

A school can be divided into six major elements: teachers, students, substantive content, instructional methods and media, time, and place. Every school can be described by explicating its six major elements. That is, every school can be understood as a social arrangement in which someone teaches someone else something with methods and materials at a time and in a place.

These elements allow for endless variations and combinations, which make up diverse educational experiences, which in turn result in student learning.

To improve a school means to improve one or more of the six elements: who teaches, who is taught, what is taught, how it is taught, the time at which it is taught, or the place in which it is taught. Typical approaches to improving those elements include modifying pre-service and in-service teacher education to upgrade teachers' skills; shifting the selection of students to produce a more "teachable" group; developing new curricula with new content for students to learn and new instructional methods and media for transmitting that content to students more effectively; rescheduling the school day or week or year to improve the frequency and sequence of "appointments" teachers and students have with each other; and re-equipping or changing the physical facilities in which students learn, as by arranging field experiences. There are, of course, many other approaches to improving these elements.

Development can be thought of as inventing, creating, or producing new variations in the elements which result in better student learning. Research-based development is using research results to guide the creation of those variations.

Most educational research is addressed to the learning process. Most of the research-based development efforts funded by NIE are addressed to producing better instructional methods and media and, to a lesser extent, new substantive content. NIE spends considerably less, for example, on developing new ways to select and train teachers, new ways to select and assign students, new ways to schedule instruction, and new ways to construct buildings and design equipment or select learning locations outside of school buildings.

In short, most of the development funded by NIE has been and continues to be curriculum development. However, NIE has reduced development in the past year while increasing research and the dissemination of products.

Activity	Proportion of NIE Effort	
	1974-75	1975-76
Conducting Research	5%	15%
Developing Products	85%	70%
Supporting Implementation	10%	15%

NIE CURRICULUM POLICY DISCUSSION GUIDE

ONE IN A SERIES

NIE wants to know what you think about the policy alternatives it is considering on this topic. Please discuss, telephone, write, or simply indicate your opinion on the blue summary accompanying these guides and send it to us. If you want further information, please send your name and address.

10

WHAT TYPES OF NEW CURRICULA SHOULD NIE DEVELOP?

NIE cannot develop all the curricula needed for every kind of student in every subject in every grade in every type of school in every kind of school district.

NIE must be highly selective. Its total budget is $70 million and not all of that can be spent to develop curricula. There are many competing demands for NIE's funds. (The size of NIE's budget can be judged by three yardsticks: 1) it could educate about 45,000 high school students in a year, 2) it could run the schools of Akron, Ohio for a year, 3) it is $1 for every $75 the U.S. Office of Education spends.)

Moreover, other Federal, state, and local agencies are currently developing curricula. Thus, NIE can leave some topics to them and concentrate on curricula they are not developing.

Furthermore, some existing curricula are quite satisfactory and do not need attention now. Thus, NIE can turn its attention elsewhere.

On the other hand, existing curricula sometimes prove to be unsatisfactory, perhaps because new kinds of students arrive at school with special needs (such as students for whom English as a second language) or perhaps because of a shift in national priorities. NIE should probably respond to such problems.

Finally, special opportunities for curriculum development sometimes arise because of a research breakthrough, a successful pilot program, or the unexpected availability of talented people. NIE should perhaps respond to such situations.

One way for NIE to choose topics to work on is to concentrate on one or two kinds of students, a few grades in school, certain types of schools, selected community settings, and/or a few subject fields. NIE can also decide what kinds of student behavior it should seek to improve, how curricula ought to be organized, and whether to develop a single best curriculum or many diverse curricula.

Turn to page 9 of the enclosed blue summary. As you read the following discussion, check alternatives on the summary or write your own. And please be selective: NIE cannot do everything.

WHAT TYPES OF CURRICULA SHOULD NIE DEVELOP?

1. Student Population

NIE might choose to deal with normal students because there are so many of

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them, with gifted students both because regular programs do not serve them well and because of what they can contribute to the nation, with handicapped students both because their problems are severe and because they will be an economic burden to the society unless they become self-supporting, with black students because many of them continue to need special help to overcome multiple deprivations, with female students because sex bias continues to be a problem in many curricula, with students from poor families because the schools can help make up for economic deprivation, with slow learners because they are missed both by curricula for the average and curricula for the handicapped, or with students from ethnic minority backgrounds because their language and cultural differences make standard curricula unsuitable for them.

As one illustration of activity already underway by another agency, the U.S. Office of Education Bureau of Education for the Handicapped spends approximately $40 million per year on research, development, and innovative programs for handicapped students at the early childhood, elementary, secondary, higher, and adult education levels.

USOE has other smaller programs for special populations such as bilingual students. Improving curricula for such students is one activity in such programs.

On which student populations should NIE concentrate its development work?

2. Level of School

NIE might concentrate its curriculum development efforts on the pre-school years because these are the years of enormous intellectual and emotional development in young children, or it might concentrate on the elementary school years because that is when students are taught the basic skills upon which all later learning is built, or it might concentrate on the secondary years because 40% of the students end their education with high school graduation (or earlier), or it might concentrate on the post-secondary years because colleges and universities have undergone enormous expansion and have tried to adjust their curricula to accommodate new types of students, or it might concentrate on the adult years because over 50% of all post-secondary students today are adults.

The Department of Health, Education, and Welfare's Office of Child Development spends about $15 million per year on research, development, and related activities aimed at improving curricula for very young children.

The Fund for the Improvement of Post-Secondary Education--also in the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare--spends about $10 million each year on research, development, and innovative activities for institutions of higher and adult education. The Fund supports a number of curriculum development activities.

Considering all of this, on which level(s) of school should NIE concentrate its development work?

3. Type of School

Federal agencies have concentrated their work on the public schools, and have usually not given direct attention to parochial, private, and propri-

etary school curricula. Of course, Federally-financed curriculum products flowing through commercial publishing channels often prove beneficial to the nonpublic schools as well.

NIE might want to focus its work on the public schools because they enroll over 85% of all students or it might want to focus instead on nonpublic schools because of their distinctive characteristics and sometimes distinctive populations.

Should NIE focus on any type of school or is such a distinction worth making?

4. Demographic Setting

Over 40% of all elementary and secondary students are enrolled in a handfull of big city school districts--less than 4% of the 17,000 districts in the nation. Conversely, over 40% of the school districts (chiefly rural) enroll less than 4% of all elementary and secondary students. Since the passage of the Elementary and Secondary Education Act in 1965, the U.S. Office of Education has given special financial assistance to disadvantaged students, most of whom are located in urban settings.

NIE might give special attention to urban school districts because they enroll a large minority of all students and a majority of disadvantaged students and because the current financial squeeze limits the ability of large cities to conduct curriculum development for themselves; or it might give special attention to suburban school districts because they have grown very rapidly in recent decades, in contrast to the cities they surround, and have been rather innovative in curricular matters; or it might give special attention to rural school districts because their small size combined with their limited wealth makes most of them unable to carry on major curriculum development activities.

Should NIE give special attention to school districts in a particular type of demographic setting? If so, for which one(s) should it develop curricula?

5. Subject Field

There are over 15 standard elementary and secondary school subjects for which NIE might develop curricula. A special case can be made for each subject. The reasons, of course, would differ. Some could be said to merit attention because of their importance in intellectual development, others because of emotional development, and others because of physical development. Some could be said to merit attention because of their academic value, others because of their recreational value. Some could be said to merit NIE support even though they already get much attention, others because they get little attention.

NIE should consider, among other things, what is already being done by other agencies.

Another Federal agency, the National Science Foundation, spends about $15 million per year to improve science dducation in elementary, secondary, and post-secondary institutions. Most of the funds are directed to improving the substantive content and teaching methods used in science courses.

The U.S. Office of Education's Bureau of Occupational and Adult Education spends about $100 million per year in research, development, and related activities to improve vocational and adult education. A substantial part of the money goes toward curriculum improvement.

Should NIE set a priority on curriculum development for certain subject fields? If so, which ones?

6. Type of Behavior

There are many ways to subdivide and to classify student behavior. Perhaps the three categories most commonly used today are thinking (cognitive), feeling (affective), and performing (psychomotor). Another familiar categorization is knowledge, skills, attitudes and values. Another is intellectual, emotional, and social. Generally, such schemes distinguish between intellectual and emotional behaviors and add other less universal categories as well.

NIE might concentrate on curricula designed to improve knowledge inasmuch as that has always been and continues to be the central objective of schooling; or on curricula designed to clarify, explain, and guide feelings because that is a more complex task than transmitting knowledge; or on curricula designed to teach physical performance because few other agencies concentrate their efforts on such curricula.

Should NIE pay special attention to any one of these types of student behavior or should it give equal attention to all?

7. Organization of Substantive Content

The content being taught can be organized in many ways: according to academic discipline (subject field), social problems, student interests, current events, and so on. The debate often turns on a choice between subject-centered organization versus problem-oriented organization. The first is often advocated because subject fields like history and biology are the categories in which knowledge is developed and organized by scholars; the second is often advocated because it helps students see the relation between real life problems and what they learn in school.

Should NIE favor one type of organization over the other when it sponsors curriculum development? Or should it support both approaches equally?

8. Diversity of Curricula

Recent years have seen a rising national concern that the cultural diversity of our society be preserved--that the history, languages, lifestyles, and values of our people not be homogenized into a single common culture. Some feel that many different curricula are necessary to support a pluralistic culture. Thus, they do not want a single curriculum--even a single superb curriculum--to become standard.

On the other hand, it can be expensive to develop even a single high-quality curriculum. And NIE should perhaps hesitate to develop anything less.

Does this force NIE to choose between creating multiple curricula to preserve cultural diversity versus creating exemplary curricula at a high standard of quality? If so, which choice should it make?